

Message Text

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O 230201Z JAN 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 015050

LONDON FOR SEITZ; CAPE TOWN FOR EDMONDSON

FOLLOWING REPEAT MONROVIA 0539 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
DAR ES SALAAM LUSAKA PRETORIA 22 JAN 77

QUOTE S E C R E T MONROVIA 0539

DEPARTMENT REPEAT TO ADDITIONAL ADDRESSEES AS DESIRED.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH REVEREND SITHOLE ON CURRENT RHODESIAN
SITUATION

SUMMARY: REVEREND SITHOLE CALLED ON ME JANUARY 21 TO MAKE
THE FOLLOWING POINTS FOR INFORMATION USG. SITHOLE APPEALED
FOR CONTINUED AND INCREASED USG PRESSURE ON SMITH. HE
COMPLAINED THAT FRONT LINE STATES' DECISION TO BACK PATRIOTIC
FRONT IS A GRAVE MISTAKE AND PART OF A LONG TERM EFFORT ON
PART OF KAUNDA TO ASSURE NKOMO EMERGES LEADER OF A FREE
ZIMBABWE. HE SAID HE IS TRAVELLING THROUGHOUT AFRICA TO
STATE HIS VIEWS AND IS CONSIDERING A ZANU-SPONSORED CONSUL-
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TATIVE CONFERENCE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL DISTRICTS OF
RHODESIA AT SOME NEUTRAL AFRICAN LOCATION AND WITH AFRICA-
WIDE PARTICIPATION TO AIR SITUATION.

1. REVEREND SITHOLE, WHO ARRIVED MONROVIA FROM ACCRA JAN-
UARY 18, HAS BEEN HAVING SERIES MEETINGS WITH GOL OFFI-
CIALS INCLUDING PRESIDENT TOLBERT. ON HIS OWN INITIA-

TIVE, AND AT TOLBERT'S URGING, SITHOLE ASKED TO CALL ON ME JANUARY 21 AND WE SPOKE FOR AN HOUR ON RHODESIAN SITUATION.

2. SITHOLE'S INITIAL OBJECTIVE IN SEEKING MEETING WAS TO REQUEST THAT EMBASSY CONVEY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO THE USG:

A. RHODESIAN NATIONALISTS TRIED UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR 11 YEARS TO BRING SMITH TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE AND THE FACT THAT FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER WAS ABLE TO DO THIS IS A LASTING ACHIEVEMENT AND IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

B. THE NATIONALISTS FEEL STRONGLY THAT UNLESS THE PRESSURE IS KEPT UP ON SMITH IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA. SITHOLE URGES THE U.S. NOT TO RELAX PRESSURES ON SMITH BUT RATHER TO INCREASE THEM.

SMITH INSISTS THAT KISSINGER PLAN IS BINDING ON ALL PARTIES EVEN ON THOSE NOT PRESENT AT THE SMITH-KISSINGER DISCUSSIONS. WE SAY THAT WE CANNOT BE BOUND AND THAT WHATEVER IS AGREED TO MUST BE AGREED TO BY ALL PARTIES INVOLVED. WE RECOGNIZE SMITH MIGHT BE PLAYING POLITICS, BUT WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF U.S. WOULD RESTATE WHAT ITS POSITION WAS, WHAT EXACTLY TRANSPIRED.

3. THE REMAINDER OF THE CONVERSATION CENTERED AROUND SITHOLE'S RESPONSE TO MY QUERY AS TO WHAT WAS BEHIND THE FRONT LINE STATES' LATEST DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR THE SECRET

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PATRIOTIC FRONT. SITHOLE OUTLINED THE RECENT HISTORY OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE VARIOUS NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE FRONT LINE STATES IN THESE DEVELOPMENTS. HE SAID IN ESSENCE THAT ALL OF THE MANEUVERS OF KAUNDA AND, TO A LESSER DEGREE, NYERERE, HAVE HAD AS THEIR SOLE OBJECTIVE TO ASSURE THAT NKOMO WOULD LEAD ZIMBABWE. HE WENT ON TO ACCUSE NKOMO OF CONSISTENTLY PLAYING AN INDEPENDENT ROLE WITH THE HELP OF KAUNDA. SITHOLE REVIEWED SOME OF THE NKOMO UNILATERAL ACTIONS INCLUDING HOLDING TALKS WITH SMITH AND VISITING SOUTH AFRICA. ON EVENTS OF MORE RECENT DATE HE DESCRIBED HOW KAUNDA FACILITATED MEETING IN LUSAKA BETWEEN NKOMO AND MUGABE AND ZANU MILITARY LEADERS IN PRISON. HE SAID THEY SIGNED UP WITH NKOMO AND MUGABE WHICH, "HAVING SPENT TEN YEARS IN JAIL MYSELF I THOROUGHLY UNDERSTAND" AND ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS CONVENED THEY WERE RELEASED. SOME WENT TO THE CONFERENCE AND OTHERS TO THE FRONT, THE OBJECTIVE BEING TO SHOW THAT NKOMO HAD SUPPORT BOTH INSIDE RHODESIA AND ON THE BATTLE FRONT. HE SAID THAT

THIS SUPPORT DOES NOT EXIST, THAT MUZOREWA HAS OVERWHELMING SUPPORT INSIDE ZIMBABWE. HE SAID EVEN AT GENEVA NKOMO'S FORCES WERE SPLIT AND THAT THE FIVE FRONT LINE STATES SPENT THEIR TIME TRYING TO HOLD THESE FORCES TOGETHER.

4. HE SAID AFTER GENEVA THERE WAS ANOTHER SUMMIT MEETING AT LUSAKA AND THAT WHILE HE AND SOME OF MUZOREWA'S MEN WERE PRESENT ONLY NKOMO AND MUGABE WERE INVITED TO THE MEETINGS. KAUNDA HE SAID NOW APPEALS FOR BACKING OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT BUT HE ONLY DOES SO AS A DEVICE TO PUSH FOR NKOMO'S LEADERSHIP.

5. SITHOLE CLEARLY CONSIDERS THE FRONT LINE STATES' DECISION TO BACK NKOMO AND MUGABE AS A SERIOUS MISTAKE WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED VARIOUSLY AS CHILDISH, DIVISIVE, AND CARRYING THE SEEDS OF BLOODSHED IN ZIMBABWE. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY AS TO WHAT THE REACTION TO THE FRONT LINE STATES' SECRET

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DECISION HAS BEEN IN ACCRA, SITHOLE SAID THEY WERE SHOCKED. HE SAID THAT TUNISIA, ZAIRE ("OR SO THEIR AMBASSADOR HERE TOLD ME") AND LIBERIA ARE AGAINST THE DECISION. THEY WANT ALL SIDES INVOLVED AND REALIZE ANY SETTLEMENT WITHOUT ALL THE PARTIES IS UNREALISTIC. SITHOLE SAID THAT HE IS GOING FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY IN AFRICA TO EXPRESS HIS VIEWS. HE SAID THAT HE WAS THE INITIATOR OF THE ARMS STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE AND THAT HE FEELS A DUTY TO SEE TO IT THAT THIS ARMS STRUGGLE COMES TO AN END. HE SAID THAT WITHOUT HIM THE ARMS STRUGGLE WOULD NOT EXIST AND HE HAS A MORAL OBLIGATION TO THOSE WHO MIGHT DIE.

6. HE SAID THAT IN REACTION TO THE FRONT LINE STATES' DECISION HE WAS THINKING OF CALLING A CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE OUTSIDE ZIMBABWE IN A NEUTRAL STATE SUCH AS MALAWI OR KENYA WHICH WOULD BRING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL THE DISTRICTS OF ZIMBABWE TO HEAR THE WISHES OF THE PEOPLE. HE SAID ALL MEMBERS OF THE OAU AND SELECTED COUNTRIES OUTSIDE AFRICA WOULD BE INVITED TO SEND REPRESENTATIVES. HE SAID HE NEEDED \$300,000 FOR THIS CONFERENCE AND WAS SEEKING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM HIS FRIENDS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE AFRICA, INCLUDING THE U.S. HE SAID IT WOULD BE A ZANU ACTIVITY BUT THAT HE HAD SENT WORD TO MUZOREWA OF HIS PLANS.

7. TURNING TO NEGOTIATIONS I ASKED IF SITHOLE FELT THERE WOULD BE A RETURN TO GENEVA. SITHOLE ANSWERED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE AND INDICATED THAT FOR HIS OWN PART HE HAS ALWAYS SAID HE WOULD NOT ABANDON THE GENEVA CONFERENCE BUT INDEED WOULD BE THE LAST TO LEAVE IT. HE DID SAY THAT MORE TIME IS NEEDED BEFORE GOING BACK TO GENEVA IN LIGHT OF THE DECI-

SION OF THE FRONT LINE STATES IN ORDER TO EXPOSE THE "WRONG PREMISES" ON WHICH THAT DECISION WAS BASED. AT THIS POINT I ASKED IF RICHARDS WERE ABLE TO GET SMITH TO ACCEPT HIS LATEST PROPOSALS WOULD SITHOLE TAKE RISK OF DELAYING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO WAIT FOR THE AIRING OF THESE PREMISES.

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SITHOLE SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT GO THAT FAR BUT THAT IT WAS DOUBTFUL THAT UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES GENEVA CONFERENCE COULD CONVENE MUCH BEFORE THE END OF FEBRUARY.

COMMENT: SITHOLE, WHOM I KNEW IN DAR, LOOKED IN GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS. HIS REPRESENTATIONS WERE DELIVERED IN A DISPASSIONATE TONE BUT HE CLEARLY VIEWS THE FRONT LINE DECISION AS A DISASTER. HE IS CONVINCED NKOMO LEADERSHIP WOULD SPELL CIVIL WAR IN AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE, THAT HE HAS LITTLE BACKING AMONG THE BLACKS THERE. HE WAS PHILOSOPHICAL ABOUT HIS BAD RELATIONS WITH KAUNDA: "WE JUST DON'T SEE EYE TO EYE". HE DESCRIBED HOW KAUNDA, EARLIER ON, HAD ADVISED NATIONALISTS NOT TO SPEAK PUBLICLY OF "MAJORITY RULE NOW" BUT THAT HE, SITHOLE, FELT COMPELLED TO GO AGAINST THAT ADVICE. HE SAID, AS A RESULT, HE IS KNOWN AS "REVEREND MAJORITY RULE NOW". IN MY REACTIONS TO SITHOLE'S COMMENTS I MADE CLEAR THE USG IS NOT TAKING SIDES AMONG THE NATIONALIST LEADERS AND I OFFERED NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO HIS APPEAL FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR A CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE. CARTER

UNQUOTE HABIB

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 23-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, RH, US, (SITHOLE, REVEREND), (CARTER, W BEVERLY JR)
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